

of the Order of Francis-Joseph of Austria, of Frederick of Württemberg, and of Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt, and an Officer of the Legion of Honour in France. Three species of birds which bear his name as their specific title—*Larus bulleri* of Hutton, *Diomedea bulleri* of Rothschild, and *Puffinus bulleri* of Salvin—will recall his fame to the memory of the future ornithologists of New Zealand.

*List of Sir Walter Buller's principal Ornithological Works.*

- Essay on the Ornithology of New Zealand. 8vo. Dunedin, 1865.  
 A History of the Birds of New Zealand. 4to. London, 1873.  
 ——. 2nd edition. 2 vols. 4to. London, 1887-88.  
 Manual of the Birds of New Zealand. 8vo. Wellington, 1882.  
 A Classified List of Mr. S. William Silver's Collection of New Zealand Birds (at the Manor House, Letcombe Regis). 8vo. London, 1888.  
 Illustrations of Darwinism, or the Avifauna of New Zealand considered in relation to the Fundamental Law of Descent with Modification. 8vo. Wellington, 1895.  
 Supplement to the Birds of New Zealand. 2 vols. 4to. London, 1905-06.

XLIII.—*Letters, Notes and Extracts.*

THE following letters addressed "To the Editors of 'The Ibis'" have been received:—

SIRS,—A Ruff and Reeve (*Machetes pugnax*) visited the marshes within a few miles of Redcar in the summer of 1901, and, judging from subsequent experience of their movements, succeeded in nesting and taking their young brood off in safety.

In the following year a diligent watch was kept for the re-appearance of the visitors, and on the 10th of May the arrival of the Ruff and *two* Reeves was announced. In company with two friends I repeatedly saw the birds and their first nests. The eggs were destroyed by accident about the end of May, but both females nested again, hatched their eggs, and got the young away.

In 1903 the Ruff and one Reeve appeared in May, but

contrived to baffle all our efforts to locate the nest. Since that year, although a strict look-out has been kept, no sign of the birds has been seen, and it is to be feared that an accident has occurred to one or both of them during the shooting-season.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

T. H. NELSON.

The Cliffe, Redcar,  
June 1906.

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SIRS,—By a slip of the pen (or by a typographical error) it was stated in my paper on the birds of Transcaucasia (above, p. 424) that *Carduelis volgensis* is met with “from Ssuram to the Ural.” The former word should be “Ssura”—a river in the Ssimbirsk Government—a right-hand tributary of the Volga (not Ssuram in the Caucasus).

On p. 409 for “unwini *Hume*” should be read “not unwini *Hume*.”

I am sorry to be obliged to add that I made a mistake in proposing a new name (*Garrulus nigrifrons*) (above, p. 426) for “*Garrulus anatoliæ*” of Derjugin and Bianchi (not of Seebolm). The above-named writers, as well as myself, were induced to treat the Chorokh Jay as a form apart by insufficient or—as is often the case in museums—by not properly labelled material. After my paper was in print, I had occasion to examine the rich and carefully labelled collection of Mr. Sarudny, of Pskov, and to make direct comparison of selected specimens with types of the *G. anatoliæ* of Derjugin and Bianchi in St. Petersburg. And I am now quite satisfied that in *G. atricapillus* and *G. krynickii* sexual and age differences are much more marked than in *G. glandarius*—females and young of the former species having the head darker, and the white or whitish on the forehead much reduced, as compared with adult males; so that the Chorokh or Armenian Jays brought home by Mr. Derjugin are only young birds and females of *G. krynickii* Kal. (= *G. anatoliæ* Seeb.).

I may add in reference to *Carduelis brevirostris* of Sarudny

(above, p. 423), that on comparison of a large series (not single skins) one can see that it is a trifle paler and greyer than *C. loudoni*, and a trifle less chestnut and more earthy greyish brown than *C. carduelis*.

In the April number of 'The Ibis' (above, p. 397) I find a note about a Wild Swan nesting in Seistan, which has been recorded as *Cygnus musicus* (Journ. Bomb. N. H. Soc. vol. xvi. p. 697, 1905). It is very justly remarked as strange that a Whooper should breed so far south. In connection with this note it will be of interest, perhaps, to your readers to know that Mr. N. A. Sarudny, in his last work on the birds of Eastern Persia (Mém. Soc. Imp. Russ. Géogr. vol. xxxvi. n. 2, 1903, p. 100), in the Russian language, says that it is the Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) that nests in Seistan. As to the Whooper, it has been stated by Mr. Sarudny (in one of his previous works) to be only a winter-visitor there, and evidently a rare one.

Yours &c.,

S. A. BUTURLIN.

Wesenburg, Esthonia, Russia,  
22nd June, 1906.

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SIRS,—Referring to my letter of the 19th April (above, p. 611) respecting the wholesale taking of eggs of the Great Skua in Iceland, I have since heard from my friends Dr. Finsch and Mr. Herluf Winge that Mr. A. Bachmann, who wrote the article to which I referred, is not a collector, but an artist and photographer, and that he visited Iceland for the purpose of photographing and not of collecting eggs. I therefore take this opportunity of apologizing to Mr. Bachmann for the mistake made in supposing him to be an egg-collector, and to have been concerned in the harrying of the colony of Great Skuas. It appears that the peasant, Oddur Brunjólsson, who took the 210 Skuas' eggs (all of which were obtained in one day), and who was photographed along with his plunder, collected them for a well-known Icelandic naturalist-dealer, Mr. Nielsen, with whom Mr. Bachmann was staying. Mr. Winge informs me that in

Iceland the Great Skua is not protected, being considered to be a destructive and noxious bird, and that its eggs are collected and eaten by the peasants in large quantities. Mr. Bachmann's article on the birds of Iceland is most interesting, but I wish that he had stated that he was not an egg-collector, and disapproved of the wholesale plunder of eggs, as I should then most certainly not have fallen into the error of supposing him to have been in any way connected with a dealer.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,  
H. E. DRESSER.

28 Queensborough Terrace, London, W.,  
15th August, 1906.

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*The Alexander Trans-African Expedition.*—Since our last notice of the progress of this Expedition (see above, p. 615) a letter has been received from Capt. Boyd Alexander, dated "Bomakandi" (on the Wellé), 20th April, 1906. He writes:—"We are going on well, but have no startling news. One day for us is much like another—an early start, a bad river to struggle against, and two halts at different spots for collecting. This is the last place where we are in touch with the great Congo Forest, and the river now flows through a very open country. We leave to-day for Dongu, which we hope to reach in about a month's time. The boats are beginning to suffer a bit. The continual shocks against the rocks are making small splits in the steel ribs along the bottom, which, however, have been effectually stopped by a kind of wax-resin obtained from the natives.

"Bomakandi is a fine station, and we have been hospitably received by the Belgian officers. When we have reached Dongu (which will be found marked in the 'Times Atlas,' no. 206) we shall have passed up the whole length of this rather terrifying river. It is very picturesque in places, being studded with rocky islands covered with forest-growth."

Another letter, dated "Niagara, on the Wellé, June 16th," contains the sad news of the death of Capt. Gosling at that place, on July 13th, leaving Capt. Alexander the sole surviving

member of the expedition. Capt. Gosling died of blackwater fever, of which he had had a previous attack. Capt. Alexander was himself in good health, and was leaving the next day for Dongu, whence he intended to try to go up the Kibali and find a way across to the Nile by that route. If he succeeds in this he will probably come out at Wadelai.

At the last meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club (see Bull. B. O. C. xvi. p. 124) three new species of birds (*Thamnolea claudi*, *Fringillaria goslingi*, and *Pytelia lopezi*) were described from the collections of this expedition which had already reached London.

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*The Ruwenzori Expedition.*—It is very satisfactory to learn that Mr. Woosnam's expedition (see above, p. 613) continues to make good progress. Mr. Carruthers, writing from the new camp at the south end of the Range on June 15th last, says :—

“At the present time we have got just two thousand bird-skins, and hope to be able to add another thousand to the collection during the next four months. We are now encamped at the S.E. end of the range, but in a few weeks we shall move to the N.E., where we expect to work for the remainder of our time.”

Mr. Carruthers's last letter is dated April 20th, 1906, from the camp at the south end of Ruwenzori. He writes :—

“About a week ago we left our camp in the Mabuka Valley, and travelled south along the base of the mountain, getting into a great low-lying plain. After four days' march we found ourselves in an uninhabited and almost waterless country, so we had to return to a village, where there is a stream of good water and many banana-groves. Here we pitched our camp on a little hill overlooking the most magnificent view.

“The whole country and vegetation change at the south end of Ruwenzori; there is no elephant-grass nor great forests. The mountains drop away very suddenly into small hills covered with short grass. The plain is like a huge



park, and we can walk anywhere on the flat. We can see over an enormous area, miles of grass dotted with trees. A large lake is close to us—an extension of Lake Albert Edward,—and we live on fish caught by the natives in this lake. Behind us are the mountains, which look like downs. We expect to stay here about two months, and then to move our camp right round into the Congo Territory.”

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*Mr. Neave's Expedition to N.E. Rhodesia.*—Mr. S. A. Neave, M.A., B.Sc. Oxon., late Naturalist attached to the Geodetic Survey in North-eastern Rhodesia, reached Fort Jameson (*via* the Zambezi and Tete) in March 1904, and travelled thence to Feira, near which place the members of the Survey had their headquarters. The next four months were spent in the districts on both sides of the Zambezi and Loangwa Rivers. The rainy season of 1904-5 was passed at Petauke, the Chartered Company's westernmost station in the East Loangwa District. In April 1905 Mr. Neave left Petauke in a south-easterly direction, and proceeded nearly to the Portuguese border. Thence he turned west, and, crossing the Loangwa, joined the members of the Survey at work there. Retracing his steps, he spent some time on the Loangwa, where he met with an abundant and varied fauna. Mr. Neave returned to Petauke at the beginning of August 1905 to refit, and, after a short trip northwards, started in December last on a journey westwards, *via* Inkushi and Chervalla's, to Ndola and the Kafué River. He left the Kafué at the end of October last, and passing close to the Irumi Mountains, through some very fine country, finally reached the Loangwa River and Petauke about the beginning of December. After a short stay there he left in the middle of January and returned home by Fort Jameson and Nyasaland.

The collection made by Mr. Neave contains about 750 specimens of Birds, besides Mammals, Fishes, Reptiles, and other objects, which he is now studying for determination.

So far as the collections have yet been worked out, the

country proves to be exceedingly interesting to students of geographical distribution.

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*Olfactory Organs of the Kiwi.*—At the meeting of the Zoological Society of London on May 29th last, Mr. R. H. Burne, F.Z.S., exhibited, on behalf of Prof. Stewart, some dissections prepared for the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons from material derived from the Society's Gardens. The specimens included the head of a Kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*) in sagittal section, shewing the relatively large size of the olfactory parts of the brain and the complexity of the olfactory chamber in that bird.

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*The Californian Earthquake.*—From a letter addressed to Dr. Finsch by Mr. Walter K. Fisher, of Stanford University (the Editor of 'The Condor'), we learn that the full force of the shock was felt at that University, the great fault which resulted from the disturbance being only seven miles off. Fortunately most of the buildings wrecked were newly erected and unoccupied, and the large Zoological Museum escaped with only broken plaster from the ceiling, but the collection in spirit suffered severely. The University, however, had arranged to begin work again in August. Mr. Fisher adds:—"I may say that the greatest loss to science from the earthquake was the total destruction of the fine building of the California Academy of Sciences, including a magnificent collection of birds, plants, insects, and reptiles, together with the scientific library. This library was the only one worthy of the name that we had on the Pacific coast. I believe only about fifty of the rarest books were saved, including, however, a copy of the first series of 'The Ibis.'"

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*Is the Kea carnivorous?*—We had supposed that after all that Sir Walter Buller and other good authorities on the birds of New Zealand had written on the carnivorous habits of the Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) there could be no longer any

doubt upon this subject, more especially as the living bird received by the Zoological Society in 1881 was provided with a mutton-chop every day, and eat it in the face of all London. But in 'Nature' of Dec. 28th, 1905, we were told that at a recent meeting of the "Wellington Philosophical Society" it had been decided that the alleged sheep-killing and flesh-eating habits of the Kea were "without a shadow of foundation," and that "although the legend cannot be said to be completely disproved, yet there is not a scrap of evidence in its favour"!

This categorical denial of what had been long considered an established fact fortunately attracted the attention of Dr. W. B. Benham, now at Dunedin, whose views on the question will be found in 'Nature' of April 12th, 1906. Dr. Benham, after making diligent enquiries, came to the conclusion that there could be no doubt that the Keas "have wrought and are still causing great havoc among the sheep in certain districts." He quotes the following amongst other evidence on the subject.

Mr. Fraser, a Stock-Inspector in Nelson province, writes:—

"I was engaged sheep-farming in the Hawea and Wanakalake districts in 1871-1883. I lost thousands of sheep from Keas. I have seen the Kea attacking the sheep, and also eating into a sheep when the latter was stuck in deep snow. I have opened scores of Keas-crops, and found wool and meat therein. I have laid poison in dead sheep in the snow, and gone back later and found dead Keas."

After this we think there need be no more question of the carnivorous habits of *Nestor notabilis*.

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*Mr. W. L. Sclater.*—Mr. W. L. Sclater, who has resigned the Directorship of the South-African Museum, Cape Town, has accepted the post of Director of the Colorado College Museum, Colorado, U.S.A. Mr. J. A. S. Bucknill (of Pretoria) has been elected President of the South-African Ornithologists' Union, to succeed Mr. W. L. Sclater.